

New Soviet

Approved For Release 2005/06/09 : CIA-RDP75B00380R000400010016-4

Missiles Believed Sent to Egypt

Surface-to-Surface 'Scuds' Seen as Potentially Dangerous Escalation

By Michael Geller

Washington Post Staff Writer

U.S. officials say it now appears certain that the Russians have sent Egypt surface-to-surface missiles capable of reaching some Israeli cities.

It is estimated that the Russian "Scud" mobile missiles, which have a range of about 160 miles, are armed with conventional, high-explosive warheads. There is no evidence that nuclear warheads have been shipped.

However, because these weapons can be fitted with either nuclear or conventional warheads, many U.S. officials view their introduction into the Middle East as potentially very dangerous.

Administration sources indicate that the Soviet action already has, or soon will have, provoked expressions of deep concern from very high levels of the U.S. government.

Details on the Soviet shipment and the diplomatic concern about it are said to be matters of "extreme sensitivity" at the moment, with officials largely guessing at the Soviet intentions.

The most benign explanation is that the missiles reflect the momentum of ever-

more advanced arms deliveries into the Middle East. On the other hand, the missile's dual capability for both nuclear and conventional warheads could be a Soviet response to the widespread belief that Israel has some operational surface-to-surface missiles of its own.

U.S. intelligence officials say there is little doubt — despite official Israeli denials — that Israel has developed and produced at least some "Jericho" missiles of its own with a range of close to 300 miles, enough to span the Sinai and reach deep into Egypt.

Israel is also widely believed to have the makings for a number of small atomic warheads — though no tests have ever been reported.

On several occasions in the past two years, the United States has turned down Israeli requests to buy U.S. Army Lance missiles. These are short-range (70 miles) weapons that can carry either nuclear or conventional explosive and which are viewed as highly accurate.

The Israelis are expected now to renew their request, but officials say there appears to be no current intention for the administration to comply.

Thus far, sources say, it is not clear precisely how many Soviet Scuds have been shipped, whether they were shipped before the war, or whether Soviet or Egyptian crews are manning them.

If the Soviets are in control, as seems likely, then they may have sent the weapons to ingratiate themselves further with the Egyptians, without the intent of letting the missiles be used unless Cairo were attacked, for example.

While the Soviets have poured billions of dollars worth of tanks, antiaircraft missiles and jet fighters into the Arab countries, until now they have provided very few long-range offensive weapons.

Soviet Mig and Sukhoi fighters and fighter-bombers are generally credited with short range when carrying bombs, and probably have very little chance of getting through Israeli interceptors.

The Soviets have provided some older Tu-16 medium bombers, but these, too, are not likely to get through Israeli defenses.

The Soviet Union, however, has also moved a squadron of more modern Tu-22 bombers into Iraq recently.

Missiles, on the other hand, even if equipped with the equivalent of a 1,000- to 2,000-pound bomb in their noses, can get through. Thus missiles in the Middle East clearly escalate the prospect for more damage.

The Israelis, with U.S. F-4 fighter-bombers, already demonstrated in 1970 that they can strike at areas deep inside Egypt. But the Egyptians, until now, have not had such a capability.

Now the Russians Have a Word for It

MOSCOW, Nov. 1 (UPI)

— The Soviet press coined a new Russian word today

— "impichment" — and told its readers for the first time that it could happen to President Nixon.

Diplomatic observers saw the reference to possible impeachment, in the weekly New Times, as one more sign of Soviet displeasure with Mr. Nixon, which erupted last week when the President alerted U.S. troops.

The New Times recalled the firing of Watergate special prosecutor Archibald Cox and the resignation of Attorney General Elliott Richardson and said that Democrats in Congress were considering the possibility of "impichment," a word not in any standard Russian dictionary.

The article avoided any direct criticism of the President.